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# Plumas County News

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Editorial Opinion

## Plenty of accolades to go around for county's new biomass boiler

📅 April 20, 2018 👤 Staff

### From concept to construction — it's a groundbreaking project

Groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings are pretty standard fare, but last week's unveiling of the new biomass boiler adjacent to the Plumas County Health and Human Services building in Quincy, heralds something that is far beyond standard.

Those involved — from county officials who supported the concept, to the state agency that helped fund it, to the Sierra Institute whose vision became a reality, to the construction team under the leadership of Mark Houston — all should be commended.

This was a project eight years in the making, but thanks to the tenacity and dogged determination of those who had a vision for what this could mean here and beyond, the project ticks off a lot of boxes:

It provides heat for a county building while drastically reducing energy costs.

It provides a place to take biomass — the woody debris removed from forests during thinning projects. Those are the projects that reduce the threat of wildfire and improve the watershed.



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It provides a model that can be replicated by other entities and jurisdictions across the state and nation.

It stimulated the local economy by pumping in nearly \$1 million during the construction process. It provided jobs.

It put Plumas County on the map when it comes to innovation.

"We're all in this together and Plumas County is ahead of the curve," remarked Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Jim Branham during the ribbon cutting ceremony earlier this month. He said that his agency saw the project as interconnecting various aspects of what is needed in California — addressing wildfire, producing local energy and promoting healthy forests and watersheds.

Now that it's been done in Plumas, it's likely that others will seek to duplicate the project. Camille Swezy and Jonathan Kusel of the Sierra Institute will be excellent resources to help guide jurisdictions through the process, while local contractor Mark Houston just might find his services needed to build facilities, since both the cross laminated timber building and biomass system are the first of their kind in the state.

CLT is a building material that is fire safe, structurally sound and renewable. It is also referred to as mass timber and was originally developed in Europe, but is growing in popularity in the United States. The material is composed of two-by-fours or two-by-sixes that are either laminated or nailed together to make a strong product that can be used for arches, beams or walls.

Since he has now worked with this product, Houston has the expertise to bring it to other types of construction projects as well.

Credit should also be given to Supervisor Lori Simpson who pushed her fellow board members to support the project when some were reluctant. "This will be the model for the whole state," she predicted last July, as she pushed for final approval.

We think that she will be proved correct.



## One thought on "Plenty of accolades to go around for county's new biomass boiler"



Will Leverett

April 21, 2018 at 10:38 am

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It would be great to know who Mark Houston is and how to contact!

Comments are closed.



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